



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

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Councilmembers Jones and Rigby Advance Minimum Wage Legislation in Howard County

Ellicott City, MD (October 7, 2021) – On October 6, Howard County Councilmembers Opel Jones and Christiana Rigby pre-filed legislation that would improve the local minimum wage in Howard County, Maryland. Their legislation (CB82-2021) would gradually raise Howard County’s minimum wage from its current rate of \$11.75 per hour to \$16 per hour over the next several years.

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation to raise the statewide minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2025. While this measure was an important step toward raising pay for working families in Maryland, it does not adequately address the rising costs that families are facing for basic needs such as housing, childcare, utilities, groceries, and other expenses in Howard County. The Howard County legislation proposed by Councilmembers Jones and Rigby would strengthen the local minimum wage beyond state requirements by (1) increasing the minimum wage, (2) accelerating the timeline for implementation, and (3) implementing an annual wage adjustment to account for inflation.

Raising the minimum wage is a key recommendation presented in the Howard County Racial Equity Task Force [Final Report](#), which was completed on August 2, 2021. In that report, the Economic and Workforce Development Subgroup noted that “the cost of living in Howard County does not allow an individual working full-time making less than \$33,636 to survive in an equitable way.” The Task Force ultimately recommended that the Howard County Council work to raise the minimum wage for both county government staff and all Howard County employees.

According to the [Maryland Center for Economic Policy](#), increasing the local minimum wage in Howard County would benefit roughly one in four employees who work in Howard County, which equates to nearly 40,000 people. Those employees would see their earnings increase in a meaningful way, allowing working families to save for homeownership, retirement, and education, as well as put money right back into the local economy.

“As a sponsor of the creation of the Racial Equity Task Force, I’m proud to support an increase to the minimum wage for all Howard County employees,” said Councilmember Jones. “Strengthening the living wage provides prosperity and economic growth for Howard County.”

“Today in Howard County, one in four families struggles to put food on the table, and over 13,000 households are severely burdened by the cost of housing,” said Councilwoman Christiana Rigby. “A living wage will put more money into the pockets of working families in Howard County who need it most. It’s good for our community, it’s good for our economy, and it’s simply the right thing to do.”

The proposed legislation was pre-filed on October 6, 2021 and will be introduced at the Council Legislative Session on November 1, 2021. Public testimony will be accepted at a public hearing on Monday, November 15, 2021. The legislation will be up for a vote at the Council Legislative Session on Monday, December 6, 2021. Once the legislation is introduced, Howard County residents can sign up to provide testimony either virtually or in-person by visiting this [website](#).

To read the legislation, please visit this website: [CB82-2021](#).

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